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GLANCES AT NEW BOOKS.

Epistolary Remonstrance to Thomas Morton, Esq. Dramatic Writer and Professed Critic and Reader to Captain Polhill, and His Majesty's Servants of Drury Lane Theatre. London. Wilson, Royal Exchange.

This is the effusion of a gentleman, aggrieved under the present system of theatrical management and the protection it receives from theatrical monopoly. We recommend it strongly to the attention of all who feel an interest in theatrical matters, not as unfolding a case of peculiar individual hardship (for of that we have not the means of judging) but as illustrating the effects of a pernicious system on the interests of the community in general. We confess that we have ourselves derived new light from it, or rather, have been led by it to the consideration of some very material points which we had previously overlooked, or regarded but slightly. For instance, under the existing laws, not only is there a restriction as to the number of houses at which legitimate dramas may be played—that is bad enough—but there is not the least security afforded that all legitimate dramas worthy of the stage shall have a chance of representation. So far from this being the case, the theatre being considered merely private property, and the right of the public never entering into consideration, the proprietor, for the time being, appoints a person to examine all plays presented to the establishment for representation, and that person guided at best by his patron's supposed interests, rejects or accepts dramas probably more with reference to their effects on the treasury than to their dramatic fitness. This consideration is as humiliating as it is monstrously unjust, for even supposing the chosen examiner to be a man of confessedly first-rate taste and judgment, he may still have his partialities and prejudices; and allowing further that he may be exempt even from these, still he is but an individual; and it is not to be expected, from the most accomplished and immaculate on the score of integrity, that he should be capable of being just in his examination of all the varieties and productions which officially come before him. The present writer brings the matter to an issue by reference to actual circumstances; and addressing Mr Morton, the present reader for Captain Polhill, at Drury Lane, at once disputes his competency. He contends that the author of such plays as those to which Mr Morton owes his reputation and his office, must necessarily be deficient in those qualities which constitute a competent critic of pieces of a high order; and, therefore, that the injustice of leaving dramatic authors without a tribunal at which they can be adequately appreciated is at present (so far as Drury Lane is concerned) in the fulness of pernicious existence.

We shall pass over the passages which test Mr Morton's productions, with a view to establish this position, and take one which has the stronger ground of a general application.

'No man is free to utter opinions which carry judgment without appeal. With your censure a work is all but undone; for a knowledge of such rejection creates prejudice with the rival Theatre, infected with similar pollution, and where three hundred prior offerings take precedence in the perusal of some similar Reader to the Household. While to the Minor Theatres, the legitimate Drama is legally interdicted: or if the manuscripts you reject are of that unimportant character which you permit like offal to be thrown to the dogs, the pernicious example of the great houses in exhibiting variety of the most opposite and irreconcileable description, is too aptly followed by these smaller houses, not to have overstocked them with more novel trivialities than are requisite to preserve them independent of your refuse. The discredit, besides, which your persecutions have attached to these Minor Theatres, the inadequate stage talents which their *limited* means can *only afford* to employ, and the inferior class of audience that consequently frequents them, give to any work, of whatever merit, produced therein, the unenviable honour of vulgar reputation and a speedy grave. While the smallness of receipts they produce, incapacitate their manager from sufficiently recompensing any literary labour of finished importance.

'To seek public notice and indemnity, on the other hand, through the "dernier ressort" of publication, is certain earnest of a dead-born poem, and irrecoverable expence. Every work of Dramatic merit, we expect to see on the Stage; and when one is offered to us at the hands of the Bookseller, we receive it with suspicion, and read it with prejudice. For the mode of its introduction implies Theatrical reprobation, and without considering the possible *incompetency*, *dishonesty*, or *temerity* of Managerial judgment, we take it for granted that errors exist somewhere, in word or plan, which, although imperceptible to us, render the outcast unworthy of representation. From this impression not even the fame of their defrauded writers could rescue *Werner* and *Fazio*, till chance produced them on the stage, when their success gave the positive lie to the opinions of Managers' own readers. If such then was the fate of those distinguished men, what has the dishonoured play of an obscurer Author to expect? Or had your own works been only known in print,—where had been the reputation of Mr Thomas Morton?'

We shall return to this subject in our next.

FAREWELL TO MY MUSE.

'I fain would soothe the sense of care,
And lull to sleep the joys that were.'—Coleridge.

Adieu! my grey goose quill
I took thee up at will;
To cool my feverish brow,
As gladly quit thee now.
Ye dreams my boyhood dreamed,
How glorious *then* ye seemed;
How idle have ye proved,—
Unworthy to be loved!
That empty sound—a name,
What is't? A phantom flame;
An aspiration Time
Subdues, miscalled sublime!
A weary, thorny track,
Which brings the traveller back
Unto the spot he left,

And oftentimes bereft
Of peace, and with it hope;
Too sensitive to cope
With critics' rancorous heart,
To brave neglect's keen dart.
These narrow walls of clay,
So high, they hide the day;
This nursery of vice,
Of fraud, of avarice;—
This Babylon I leave,
Nor sigh at parting heave:
To-morrow shall mine eye
Salute the open sky,
The fields where winds the rill,
And turns the village mill;
Where mountain woods are waving,
And mountain torrents raving;
The mountain breeze is sweet,
The mountaineer as fleet;
Where lasses' eyes are blue,
And lasses' bosoms true;
Whence industry doth scare
Deceit, and crime, and care;
Where fellowship is found,
Where social joys abound,
Where each and all may claim
A brother's sacred name.
There shall I freely breathe,
Will cull, and bind my wreath
Of flowers,—not Poesy!
Flowers may at pleasure die,
I heed not, Nature made
And she may make them fade;
But thus to sell the mind,
Enrich the unrefined,
For every fool and knave
To fume, to fret, to rave;
Neglect and hunger brave,—
Of slaves the veriest slave:
'Tis torture of the worst,
A bondage I must burst!
Far better live and die
In dull obscurity,
Than thus, with madness rife,
Consume my spring of life;
The sycophant of power,
To grace the festal hour
Of fools, the rich and proud,
A banter to the crowd!
I go.—Yet wherefore now
This burden on my brow?
Why clouds mine eye a tear?
'Tis, that old friends are dear!
We weep, and turn away,
And going, still delay;
So I, first drop my pen,
Then snatch it up again;
Now passion, and now pride
Prevails, till seems to chide
A deep and awful voice,—
Determining my choice:
'Be gone! ere round thee yet
'Is closed the fatal net;
'Resign the Muse for ever!
'Else, peace and thou must sever:
As man respect thyself,
For perishable pelf,
Or fame despise to barter
The mind's far nobler charter!

INFELIX.

PRESERVATION OF CROSBY HALL.

A FRIEND has just put into our hands a paper on the above subject, inviting us to bring it before our readers. We readily do so, considering that it is not only the mere antiquarian who is interested in the preservation of a fine piece of architecture, but that all who know the beneficial influence of pure taste in its negative as well as 'positive operation, must, from higher motives, be anxious that no good work shall perish. The extracts which we give explain the present situation of the building; a handsome subscription has already been made towards repairing and preserving it, and nothing but publicity seems wanting to secure a sufficient sum for those purposes. We should shorten our extract, did it not express, in a very tasteful manner, sentiments applicable much more extensively than to a single building, however beautiful. There is a local interest attached to Crosby Hall, as the residence of the celebrated Duke of Glo'ster, afterwards Richard III: it is curious to think of him who was 'himself alone' as occupying a spot now devoted exclusively to the traffic of merchants, and the quieter schemes of mercantile ambition:

'RICHARD III. ACT 1. SCENE 2.

'*Gloster.*—That it may please you leave these sad designs
To him that hath more cause to be a mourner,
And presently repair to CROSBY PLACE,
Where, after I have solemnly interr'd
At Chertsey Monastery this noble king,
And wet his grave with my repentant tears,
I will with all expedient duty see you.'

'Crosby Hall, the only part now remaining of the mansion referred to above, is situated in the parish of St Helen, in the Ward of Bishopsgate, within the city of London. This princely abode of an English merchant was erected by Sir John Crosby, in the reign of Henry the Sixth, and was completed in the subsequent reign of Edward the Fourth. After the death of Sir John Crosby in 1475, it became the residence of Richard Plantagenet, Duke of Gloucester, afterwards King Richard the Third, and it is connected with many associations of deep historical and local interest.

'The chief celebrity of Crosby Hall has, however, resulted from its rare architectural beauties, being undoubtedly the finest and purest specimen of the domestic architecture of the fifteenth century existing in the metropolis; perhaps in the empire.—Some of the most striking features of its magnificent and graceful style have been adopted in various modern edifices. . . . .

'It is only by cherishing such specimens of pure and refined taste as are within the reach of public observation, that we can direct the attention of the people to the beauty and the excellency which they would otherwise pass by without notice; regarding with equal indifference the faultless model, or the incongruous deformity.

'As a great commercial and manufacturing country, England has too long felt the absence of more general encouragement to the national taste. The hand of the English artificer is practised beyond that of any other workman, whilst his eye is comparatively untutored. The manufacturer at home earns therefore the wages of labourer; the foreigner obtains the profit price of invention; we pay dearly for elegancies and fashions from abroad, and compete to undersell the artist, by the extra toil of the labourer. This is a national and serious disadvantage; its influence extends far more widely than may be at first imagined; and without entirely adopting the severe reproach, that "the monument which the foreigner contemplates with admiration, an Englishman only beholds as a mark to throw a stone at," we cannot but admit and deplore its applicability. It is an evil which most men are ready to acknowledge, many to regret, many to ridicule, but few to remedy. We do not for a moment deny the encouragement that is afforded to the arts by the higher classes of society: whatever is really valuable in painting or in sculpture is sure to meet with liberal patronage, and to find its place in the saloons of the affluent; but we are speaking in behalf of a totally different class of persons; we are considering the great body of the handicraft workmen of England; and we are convinced that very little expense and exertion are requisite to apprentice the eye, as well as the fingers, of the artificer. We discern already the dawn of that important improvement in the condition of the rising generation; the beauties and defects of public buildings are now canvassed in newspapers, and in many cheap publications, which fall into the hands of the working people; many ancient structures, erected

at a time when excellence alone was aimed at, are beginning to excite a due measure of admiration. These, in many instances, are monuments accessible to the poor, as well as to the rich; and the mechanic who has passed by "an old tumble-down place," without a feeling or a thought, learns to look upon it with altered sentiments, when he hears it commended for beauties that he never dreamt of, and finds his better informed neighbours subscribing their money to preserve or restore it. Thus the minds of some, especially among the young, are awakened to new perceptions; and it is no difficult stretch of imagination to look forward to its progressive influence on the habits of the people, and on the manufactures of the country. Instead of closing the gates of our national buildings and gardens, and fencing round our works of art with rigid exclusions and penal statutes, to protect them from the hand of barbarous mutilation, let us teach the populace to appreciate their beauty and their usefulness; and at least induce a taste for the preservation of these ornaments to our country, by setting the example.'

NOON.

Beneath some spreading tree to lie
At noon—and list, the young leaves shiver,
Stirred by the breeze's passing sigh
That wanders o'er the silent river,
And mark the flowers' varied dye,
And watch the light clouds as they flee,
In changing form, o'er azure sky,—
Delights the soul of Poesy. G. C—N.

LADY M.'S PONY PHAETON.

No. V.

CHEDDAR CLIFFS AND SPAR VENDERS.

[Concluded.]

TO LADY SARA B.

Into this singular chasm then, we had just entered, and were beginning to realize some of the highly wrought feelings, which the above, and other descriptions, had induced, when they were quickly put to flight, by a panting voice behind us, exclaiming, 'Please my lady,—be pleased, zur, to buy a bit of spar of a poor ooman! Six small children, yer honor, and I h'ant nothing to support um with, but what the company as do come to zee the rocks is pleased to give I. Here's a *tatee* (potatoe) bit, yer honor; and this is a bird's-nest piece, as we do call it, my lady: und bootiful bits too, as sparkles jist for all the worl like so many dimunds:—them's very much admired! Six small children, zur! Do e please, ma'am, to help a poor cretur,' &c. &c.

We stopped, of course, and were on the point of giving—(I am free to confess) in the same spirit, and for the same reason which actuated the good man in the parable; that is, for her 'importunity;' for we felt not a little sceptical as to the limited means by which she and her children subsisted in this taxed and expensive world: however, before we could accomplish our intention, we were suddenly assailed by three other screaming women, whose speed towards us—from heaven knows whence—had been accelerated by the unequivocal symptoms of largess which they beheld. The three new comers gabbled the same kind of tale, with a strength of lungs that made the rocks reverberate:—thus it ran,—

'No, ma'am! no, zur! not to *she*; *she* ar'nt a got more nur two children, and she have constant work zummer and winter, at the fectory hard by; but 'tis a charity to give to *we!* We have all long vamilies—yes, indeed, zur;—it's true, ma'am;—I've a got seven, and this poor cretur have a jist buried her ninth!' &c. &c.

All this was uttered at the top of three treble voices, *ad libitum*, *da capo*, and with interminable variations, accompanied by the wailing solo which first greeted us.

'I come vurst;—the lady and gentleman was a going to give I something; you always tries to get the bread out of my mouth—zo ye do! Don't you believe they, ma'am!'

Oh, that bevy of clamorous women! Oh, the sad spectacle of raging passions, hypocrisy, and falsehood, thus raised by our innocent visit! All expostulation was vain. To finish the picture would be tedious, and would assuredly be deemed over-coloured; but it is as absolutely true, as that the gloomy cliffs themselves are still in being. In short, we were now surrounded by *seven* of these spar venders. Do not, Sara, provokingly call to mind Falstaff's 'eleven men in buckram;' for of a surety these, our opponents (to quiet enjoyment) were bona fide flesh and blood, and far more terrific than were his impalpable antagonists. Seven times were we compelled to hear that 'a poor boy fell off *that* cliff nine weeks ago.' Seven times were we incited to commiserate the fate of a sheep that had suffered a similar catastrophe 'from the next point.'

If we remarked *sotto voce* to each other, the sublime and imposing altitude of a neighbouring crag, I found to my dismay, that these weird sisters also 'knew *our* thoughts,' for all eagerly exclaimed,—

'That rock's six hundred feet high, my lady!'

If the hollow jaws of a huge inaccessible cavern claimed our wonder,—

'That's the Devil's oven, yer honor!'

We intreated these unrelenting informers to desist,—'to exhale!'—Oh, that they too had 'made themselves air!' We promised to give each one of them money on our return, if they would be so good as leave us; and as a provocative to their retreat, assured them that they should have nothing if they persisted in following us so obtrusively. In vain! High Dutch arguments—expostulations in 'Ebrew Greek' would have prevailed as soon. If we had walked in that rift till now, I do believe those women would still be gabbling round us.

They conquered;—we fairly gave up the contest; and having kept our implied promise to the first visitant (I regretted that the dogged obstinacy of the other six prevented them from participating in the trifling donation that our ill furnished purses could supply)—we were compelled to return to the inn.

Poor human nature! How much more easily is it discomposed by the petty vexations of life, than by those of deeper interest: there is a dignity in sustaining with equanimity the severe assaults of fortune; we then stand, as it were, on a pinnacle—conspicuous marks for the pity or admiration of our fellow mortals; but irritating crosses of this description fool us to the top of our bent, and swell the trifling annoyances we meet with into troubles of magnitude. I never found the pertinacity of spar venders so very timesome as that which we met with at Cheddar cliffs: those women were living exemplifications of the 'attraction of cohesion.' I would not visit those haunted rifts again, for all the 'specimens' they may contain, and yet I love the chippings and fragments of distant mountains with a love passing that of geologists; for those which we possess—and which, with other productions of nature, decorate the library mantleshelf, to the exclusion of ornaments of art—you know, Sara, are pleasantly associated in our recollections, with *tête-à-tête* excursions of exceeding enjoyment. It is delightful to look at the summit of Malvern hill, which had borne the buffetings of a thousand tempests, reposing quietly here, in close unwonted fellowship with the summit of Dunmail-raise from Cumberland: to witness the intimate union which subsists between these crystals of pure, white, transparent spar, and their dark matrix—Rudstock coal—in which they lie

embedded: to trace upon the flashing surfaces of copper ore (digged out of the bowels of the harmless earth) the same gorgeous hues,

'That in the colors of the rainbow live,
And play i' the plighted clouds:'

to feel one's spirit kindle at the sight of this small chip of Elba rock, over which the restless footsteps of an exiled Emperor have wandered: to admire and wonder at one of the mighty works of nature, displayed in the conchous formation of that piece of marble;—and thus to moralise (though in an inverse ratio to Hamlet's depreciating speculation on the 'bunghole' uses of Alexander), while tracing the origin of the 'statue that delights the world,' to the tiny convocations of antediluvian snails! But a truce to gossiping. I see the Marquess galloping up the north avenue, come to talk of the whereabout of a certain fair sojourner at the Lakes. Farewell dear sister. Do not expect to hear again from your own

JULIA.

THEATRICALS.

COBURG.

THE veteran H. Johnston and Miss Pearson are now the stars at this theatre. We caught a glimpse of them the other night in *Rob Roy*, in which piece the former played the Highland chieftain, a character well suited to the rough energy of his style, the latter *Diana Vernon*, and a Mr Frazer, *Francis Osbaldistone*. The little we saw impressed us favourably, both as to the getting up and the acting. The house was pretty well attended,—the pit least so,—a fact only so far satisfactory as it showed that no objectionable means had been resorted to in order to fill it.

After the play followed *Village Scandal*, or, *Truth's a Lie*; a new comic piece, evidently of French origin—the moral of which is, that scandal is more mischievous than a little irregular gallantry,—at least on the male side. For example: a village maiden is about to receive a crown of flowers, and several of silver, as a reward for superior discretion in conduct, for not having afforded an opportunity for prattle, even by a kiss—by the bye, this belies its French origin, for we believe bythe French code kissing is tolerated—but *allons*: *Monsieur Delorme* (Honner), too sensible of the pretty face of his cousin *Georgette* (Miss Pearson), after due dodging up and down the garden, snatches a half-reluctant kiss; *Mag* (Mrs Weston), from a neighbouring window, witnesses the astounding act, and resolves to make the most of it; first, by preventing *Georgette* from receiving the reward in wait for her, and second, by informing *Madame Delorme* (Mrs Harrison). But Cupid stands by his intended victims, and suggests cunning devices. *Delorme*, apprehensive of *Mag's* tongue, prepares an antidote to its venom. His wife comes to him in the garden; he goes through the same routine with her as with *Georgette*, assists her with the watering pot, plucks a rose and presents it to her, snatches a kiss, and altogether amazes her with the excess of his gallantry. *Georgette* has a lover (Smith) a simple youth, more fond than penetrating; she knows he will be told by *Mag*, and though she is conscious of perfect fidelity to him, she foresees temporary misunderstanding, and besides, failure at the awarding of the expected chaplet; she therefore prepares her antidote; she forewarns *Marcel Margot*, of the consequences of being jealous, of the readiness of busy people to take advantage of that troublesome mood, by feeding it with the inventions of their own malignity, and she tells him how to be prepared against their machinations,—this is merely by the utterance of two words to whatever is told him—'Twas I.' *Georgette*, it is clear, is an artful wench, and but half deserves the crown. The contrivances, however, work happily. *Old Mag* tells her tale to *Marcel Margot*, but he silences her by the magic words 'Twas I,' and reads her a lesson against censoriousness. But *Mag* is yet but partially defeated; she reserves her demolishing battery to the last scene,—that in which all parties are to be assembled, and the chaplet to be awarded. They arrive: she tells her tale before them all. Her relation of all that she saw in the garden produces only amusement to *Madame Delorme*, who to every additional matter told her, laughingly exclaims 'Twas I.' *Mag* then tries to produce confusion by alarming the jealousy of *Delorme* himself; this she does on the strength of some blundering admissions of the simple *Marcel Margot*, which had not the least foundation. She is, however, defeated at all points, voted by general consent a nuisance and common disturber, and actually drummed out of the presence, with no other consolation than that they will all be unhappy afterwards. Of course there being now no obstacle, *Georgette* receives the reward; she and *Marcel Margot*, are forthwith to be married, and all parties wear faces of gladness.

We have but little room for remark. The acting is upon the whole creditable. There is, we have observed, at what are called the minor theatres, a tendency in the comic actors to overdo their parts; they seem desirous to give increased obviousness to the drollery, by making it broader; and though they sometimes succeed, it is generally at the expense of blunting the point.

Miss Kelly's mono-dramatic entertainment, called *The Souvenir*; or, *Dramatic Recollections*, commences on the 6th of July at the Hanover square rooms.

Mr Jones, of the Edinburgh and Drury Lane theatres, opened the New City Theatre last night, with a company consisting of several performers from the metropolitan theatres, and some of the country. We wish him every success, and shall most likely report progress in our next.

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